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SUBJECT: BURMA, ZIMBABWE DISCUSSED AT SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN
DEBATE ON REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

REF: STATE 152831

11. (U) The Security Council unanimously adopted a Presidential Statement (PRST) on the role of regional and sub-regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security on November 6, 2007. The adoption was preceded by an open debate, in which the Secretary-General, all Council members, five regional

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organizations, and twenty-four other member states participated. Ambassador Khalilzad delivered the U.S. statement, affirming the importance of identifying and developing "modalities by which to enhance cooperation between these organizations and the UN." Full text of the PRST is in paragraph 6. The U.S. statement can be found on USUN's website, at www.usnnewyork.usmission.gov/press_releases/20071106_209.html. All other statements are available on the UN website, in document S/PV.5776.

12. (U) Indonesia, in its capacity as Council President for November, selected the topic for this month's thematic debate. Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr. N. Hassan Wirajuda chaired the meeting and focused his remarks on the role played by ASEAN in Southeast Asia. FM Wirajuda noted that all signatories and acceding states of ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation had "renounced the use of force and bound themselves to peacefully settling their disputes in the region." He also claimed that the attainment of an "ASEAN Security Community" would enhance ASEAN's capacity "for conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict peace building." The idea of a Security Community was first introduced at the 2003 ASEAN Summit and will be enshrined in ASEAN's Charter, scheduled for adoption at the next ASEAN summit later this month. According to Wirajuda, the establishment of this Security Community will enable ASEAN to deepen its commitment to human rights and democracy.

13. (U) The situation in Burma and ASEAN's role in addressing it were mentioned in numerous statements. Apart from the U.S., the UK, France, and the Philippines referred to the situation in Burma and ASEAN's role in addressing it. The UK and France commended ASEAN for its commitment to regional cooperation and its support of Special Envoy Gambari. Philippine Foreign Minister Alberto Romulo diverted from his prepared speech to call for the "immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi without conditions" and the inclusion of all political parties, including the National League for Democracy, in the democratization process.

14. (SBU) In contrast with the Philippines, strong language on Burma, the ASEAN statement, read by Singapore, was silent on Burma. (Note: Singapore circulated the ASEAN statement prior to the open debate but Burma refused to join consensus.

Per the Singaporean Deputy Chief of Mission, Indonesia -- prompted by Singapore -- convinced Burma just before the afternoon session of the day-long meeting to join consensus and allow Singapore to present a united ASEAN statement. End Note) The other ASEAN members participating in the debate - Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia - kept their comments more general and did not mention Burma. Thailand stressed the importance of developing a sense of community in the region and adhering to the "ASEAN Way," while Malaysia noted that the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation enshrines the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. On the other hand, Vietnam suggested that "possible modalities of partnership between the UN and regional organizations must be further explored and expanded on the basis of equality and mutual reinforcement."

15. (U) The UK also used the Council's discussion on the role of regional organizations to comment on Zimbabwe. Noting the role of South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in working toward resolving the crisis in Zimbabwe, the UK PermRep strongly condemned the government of Zimbabwe. He said that the UK would "support any process to improve the plight of the people in Zimbabwe, where human rights abuses, appalling standards of government, brutal intimidation and economic collapse have turned (Zimbabwe) into one of the most desperate places on earth."

16. (U) Begin text of Presidential Statement S/PRST/2007/42:

At the 5776th Meeting of the Security Council, held on 6 November 2007, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The role of regional and sub-regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

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The Security Council reaffirms its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council recognizes the important role of regional and sub-regional organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations as well as its relevant resolutions, in particular resolutions 1625 (2005) and 1631 (2005), and previous relevant presidential statements on cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations.

The Security Council emphasizes that the growing contribution made by regional and sub-regional organizations in cooperation with the United Nations can usefully support the work of the Organization in maintaining international peace and security, and stresses in this regard that such contribution should be made in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council further recognizes that regional and sub-regional organizations are well positioned to understand the root causes of many conflicts and other security challenges close to home and to influence their prevention or resolution, owing to their knowledge of the region.

The Security Council recalls its determination to take appropriate steps to further the development of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. It welcomes recent developments with regard to the cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union.

The Security Council, while maintaining the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, encourages regional and sub-regional organizations to strengthen and increase cooperation among them, including

to enhance their respective capacity, in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council underlines the importance of the United Nations political support and technical expertise in this regard.

The Security Council encourages regional cooperation, including through the involvement of regional and sub-regional organizations in the peaceful settlement of disputes, and intends to consult closely with them whenever appropriate on their role in future peacekeeping operations as well as political and integrated missions authorized by the Security Council.

The Security Council stresses the need to develop effective partnership between the Council and regional and sub-regional organizations in order to enable early response to disputes and emerging crises.

The Security Council underlines the importance of exploring the potential and existing capacities of regional and sub-regional organizations in the field of peace and security, covering, inter alia, the spectrum of conflict prevention, confidence-building, conflict resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peace-building, and welcomes regional dialogue and the promotion of shared norms as well as common regional approaches to the settlement of disputes and other issues relating to peace and security.

The Security Council stresses the potential role of regional and sub-regional organizations in addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the need to take into account in the peacekeeping operations' mandates, where appropriate, the regional instruments enabling states to identify and trace illegal small arms and light weapons.

The Security Council welcomes the efforts undertaken by its subsidiary bodies with responsibilities in counter-terrorism to foster cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations, notes with appreciation the efforts made by an increasing number of regional and sub-regional organizations in countering terrorism and urges all relevant regional and sub-regional organizations to enhance the effectiveness of their counter-terrorism efforts within their respective mandates and in accordance with international law, including with a view to develop their capacity to help Member States in their efforts to tackle the threats to international peace and security posed by acts of terrorism.

The Security Council recognizes the importance of promoting the identification and further development of modalities which enhance the contribution of regional and sub-regional

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organizations to the work of the Council in maintaining international peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. For that purpose, the Security Council deems it useful to consider further strengthening its interaction and cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council recognizes the Peacebuilding Commission, in its area of competence, as a forum for coordination in the area of post-conflict between the United Nations system and regional and sub-regional organizations, in accordance with its resolution 1645 (2005) and General Assembly resolution 60/180.

The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to include in his report pursuant to its Presidential Statement of 28 March 2007 (S/PRST/2007/7) a recommendation on practical ways and means to increase and strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Security Council invites all Member States to contribute more actively to the strengthening of the capacity of

regional and sub-regional organizations in all parts of the world, in issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

End Text.
Khalilzad